

In the Specification:

Please amend the specification as shown:

Please delete the paragraphs [0090] and [0091] and replace them with the following paragraphs:

[0090]EXAMPLE 3. Thioaptamer Gene Silencing. The following studies were conducted to demonstrate gene silencing using thioaptamers. Standard gene silencing studies were conducted with the following modification to the materials and methods. Phosphoromonothioate substituted siRNAs (thioaptamers) were used from the siSTARTER Luciferase Kit to conduct studies (Dharmacon, USA). The methods used were as described in the manufacturer's instructions. The term "luc" refers to the luciferase reporter gene. Briefly, the following siRNA duplexes were provided in the kit:

Anti-luc siRNA-1

5'- GAU UAU GUC CGG UUA UGU AUU (SEQ ID NO.: 26)

UU CUA AUA CAG GCC AAU ACA U p-5' (SEQ ID NO: 34)

Anti-luc siRNA-2

5'- CUG AAU ACA AAU CAC AGA AUU (SEQ ID NO.: 27)

UU GAC UUA UGU UUA GUG UCU U p-5' (SEQ ID NO: 35)

Anti-luc siRNA-3

5'- UCC GGA AGC GAC CAA CGC C UU (SEQ ID NO.: 28)

UU AGG CCU UCG CUG GUU GCG G p-5' (SEQ ID NO: 36)

Non-specific luc control siRNA

5'- AUG UAU UGG CCU GUA UUA G UU (SEQ ID NO.: 29)

UU UAC AUA ACC GGA CAU AAU C p-5' (SEQ ID NO: 37)

[0091]The following siRNA thioaptamers duplexes were synthesized and used in these studies:

Thioluc1(thio siRNA duplex 1)

5'- CU*G A*AU ACA AAU CA*C A*GA A UU -3' (sense) (SEQ ID NO.: 30)

3'- UU-GA C U UA UGU UUA GU G U CU UP-5' (antisense) (SEQ ID NO: 38)

ThioLuc2 (Thio siRNA duplex 2)

5'- C*UG *AAU ACA AAU C*AC *AGA A UU -3' (sense) (SEQ ID NO.: 31)

3'- UUGA C UUA UGU UUA GUG UCU UP-5'(antisense) (SEQ ID NO: 39)

ThioLuc2 (Thio siRNA duplex 3)

5'- *CU*G AAU ACA AAU CAC *AG*A A UU -3' (sense) (SEQ ID NO.: 32)

3'- UU GA C UUA UGU UUA GUG UC U UP-5' (antisense) (SEQ ID NO: 40)

Control1 (control thio siRNA duplex 1)

5'- AU*G U*AU U GGCCU GU*A U*UA G UU -3' (sense) (SEQ ID NO.: 33)

3'- UUUU C A UA A CC GGA C A U A AU CP-5' (antisense) (SEQ ID NO: 41)

* = location of thio-modification.